A

MODERATE SHORT DISCOURSE CONCERNING Tenderneſs of Conſcience.

By JOHN BRADSHAW Rector of *Ettchingham* in *Suſſex*.

Acts 10. 14. Not ſo Lord.

Felix Conſcientia, in qua miſericordia & veritas obviaverunt ſibi, juſtitia & pax oſculatæ ſunt. St. Bern. de interiori domo.

——— *Ego nec tumultum*
Nec mori per vim metuam, Te habente
Carole *terras.* Hor. Car. lib. 3. od. 14.

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PErlegi hunc tractatum de Tenera Conscientia in quo nihil reperio aut sanæ doctrinæ aut bonis moribus contrarium quo minus Imprimatur.

In Ædibus Lambethanis
Mart. 26. 1663.

Dan. Nicols R. P. D.
Arch. Cant. Capel.
Domesticus.

43-4-6-105.

AMen qui dicitur, qui Alpha & Omega, quærentibus qui via est, credentibus veritas, viventibus vita, inutilem me servum suum dirigat ne errem extra viam, regat ne agam contra veritatem, erigat ne cadam infra vitam, Amen.

THE
PREFACE.

Having provided upon that dark and gloomy day Januar. 30. *last, ſome meditations upon that Scripture* 1 Sam. 24. 5. *After I had ſhewed how a ſelf-ſmiting heart, or a tender conſcience is ever moſt tender of offering the leaſt injury to the Lords Anointed, and how much the implacable enemies of his late Majeſty of ever glorious memory had cut off from him, I thought it might be no ill office to any, but poſſibly ſerviceable to the deſires of many who have deſired to be acquainted with the meaning of that, to which ſo many for many years have pretended, if I took a brief Survey of a ſelf-ſmiting heart or tenderneſs of conſcience in general. The ſubject is purely Theological, and therefore not unſutable to a Church mans ſearch: nor know I of any, either at home or abroad, that have written profeſſedly and directly of that ſubject. I handle it only as* thema ſimplex; *not taking upon me to define how far our governours may or may not bear with or yield to tender, dubious, or ſcrupulous conſcien-*

ces.

ces. I have ever been very tender and wary of dealing in any State affairs, whether purely political, or mixt, as partly theological, partly political. I leave that to the Higher powers, only begging of God to guide them in all things for the beſt. Four things I have aim'd at, and endeavour'd in this diſcourſe: Firſt truth, that I may not deceive: Secondly clearneſs, that I may not confound: Thirdly moderation, that I may not offend: Fourthly brevity, that I may not tire. Bleſſed be the King of Kings, that hath not only reſtored us our King again, but a King ſo gracious, ſo earneſtly and conſtantly deſirous of the well-fare of the ſouls, conſciences, and external proſperity of his people. God give to all his people hearts to make a dutiful and grateful return of Love, Loyalty, and Obedience, Amen.

Jam fides, & pax, & honor pudorque
Priſcus, & neglecta redire virtus
Audet, *&c.* *Hor. carm. ſæcul.*

Errata.

PAg. 1. *l.* 15. *r.* expreſſing, *p.* 3. *l.* 15. *r.* cold, *p.* 4. in *mar. r.* as, *p.* 4. *l.* 18. *r.* plainneſs, *p.* 4. in *mar. r.* audeo dicere, *p.* 6. *l.* 14. *r.* vegetative, *p.* 6. *l.* 26. *r.* intentions, *p.* 6. *l.* 28. *r.* intention, *p.* 11. in *mar. r.* ponderant, *p.* 16. *l.* 32. *r.* expected, *p.* 16. in *mar. r.* 1, 2. *p.* 17. *l.* 3. *r.* and knows, *p* 19. in *mar. r.* vel, *p.* 21. *l.* 11. *r.* in our callings.

OF

OF TENDERNESS OF Conſcience.

CHAP. I.

HOwever the phraſe or (a) expreſſion of *tenderneſs of Conſcience*, is not to be found in Holy Scripture, *totidem verbis*, yet the thing it ſelf is both in precepts and examples. *In* * precepts 1 *Tim.* 3. 9. holding the myſtery of faith in a *pure Conſcience*. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 22. abſtain from *all appearance of evil*, or (as it may be read) from all *kind* of evil. Beſides theſe and many other precepts, we have † *examples* many: Of *David* 1 *Sam.* 24. 5. troubled for cutting of his Soveraigns Skirt; of *Paul* *Act.* 23. 1. and *Act.* 24. 16. and elſewhere. Other examples there are, which for brevity I pretermit. That of *Joſiah* uſually alledged, is not ſo clearly pertinent 2 *Chron.* 34. 27. the tenderneſs of his heart expreſſeth it ſelf in humiliation.

2. Tenderneſs of Conſcience, or a tender Conſcience, is a gracious *mean* betwixt a *ſcrupulous* Conſcience on the *right hand*, and a *wide*, *ſluggiſh* or *ſeared* Conſcience on the *left hand*; whereby we are *quickly and deeply ſenſible* of having done, and *wary* of doing any evil God hath clearly forbidden, or of

(a) Taken from the moſt tender parts of the body, as the eye, &c. or from ſome part newly healed.

* *Tim.* 5. 22. keep thy ſelf pure, *Eccleſ.* 9. 2. as he that feareth an oath.

† *Gen.* 44. 17. God forbid I ſhould do ſo, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. *Davids* heart ſmote him, 1 *Chro.* 11. 19. my God forbid it me that I ſhould do this thing.

omitting any good he hath clearly commanded.

3. A mean or mediocrity is that which lies betwixt two extreames, and is ordinarily twofold: (*a*) 1. Of *Participation*, so a *gray* colour is a *mean* betwixt *black* and *white*, as partaking of both. 2. Of *Abnegation*, so *moral virtues* are a *mean* betwixt two vicious extreames, as denying to share with either, but rather receeding from, and opposing both. The former I may not unfitly term, (b) *Medium compositionis*; the latter *Medium oppositionis*.

(a) *Medium per participationem, seu secundum formam per negationem utriusque extremi seu per privationem* Jandunus.

(b) *Medium compositionis vel oppositionis.*

4. These means are of several sorts, Natural, Artificial and Moral. Not to speak of the 2. former, a Moral mean is twofold, 1. A *Virtue*, 2. A thing *Indifferent*. A *Virtue* is a medium, whose two extreams (*c*) are *both evil*. A thing *Indifferent*, whose two extreams are one *evil*, the other *good* in general.

(c) Ἡ δὲ ἀρετὴ περὶ πάθη καὶ πράξεις ἐστίν· Ἐν οἷς ἡ μὲν ὑπερβολὴ ἁμαρτάνεται, καὶ ἡ ἔλλειψις ψέγεται τὸ δὲ μέσον ἐπαινεῖται, &c. *Aristot. Ethic.* lib. 2. c. 6.

5. All *moral virtues*, however for their *quality* they are an ἀκρότης, and for their *degree*, yet as to their *essence* they are (*d*) a μεσότης. Thus *valour* lies betwixt *rash venturousness* on one hand, and *cowardise* on the other; *liberality* betwixt *prodigality* and *covetuousness*, *magnificence* betwixt *wast* and *parcimony*, *magnanimity* betwixt (*e*) *pride* and *pusillanimity*, *modesty* betwixt *ambition* and *contempt of honour*, *meekness* betwixt *wrath* and *over much lenitude* or *sheepishness*, &c.

(d) Τῆς μὲν κακίας ἡ ὑπερβολὴ καὶ ἡ ἔλλειψις τῆς δὲ ἀρετῆς ἡ μεσότης, *ibid.*

(e) *Rebus augustis animosus atque fortis appare, sapienter idem, contrahes vento nimium secundo, turgida vela*, Hor.

6. As it is in *Moral virtues*, so it is in *Christian graces*, they are seated between two extreams, which

As polling the head is a mean betwixt letting the hair grow at full length, and shaving it quite off. So *Ezek.* 44. 20. Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long. they shall only poll their heads, *spoken of the Jewish Priests.*

yet

yet are not only by *defect* and *excess*, but by a *contrary deviation* also from a *just intermediate rectitude*. *Deut*. 5. 32. you shall observe to do what the Lord your God hath commanded you; you shall not *turn aside to the right hand nor to the left*. Mat. 7. 14. Strait is the gate, and (a) *narrow is the way*.

Contrition for sin is a mean 'twixt *hardness* and *no sorrow*, 1 *Cor*. 5. 2. on one hand, and being *overwhelmed* with *over much sorrow* on the other, 2 *Cor*. 2. 7. *Justifying faith* is a mean betwixt *works*, as pretending to justification on one side, and a *dead faith* void of works on the other. Hope is seated 'twixt *desperation* and *presumption*; *Charity* 'twixt *jealous*, *rash suspicion* on one side, and *blind affection* on the other; *Zeal* 'twixt a *cooler* or (which is worse) a *lukewarm* temper on this side, and a *phrenetical furious* distemper on that side; *Temperance* is a keeping the body in subjection between *pining* and *pinching* on one part, and *glutting* and *pampering* it on the other. *Timothy* being infirm was advised to drink no longer *water*, but a little *wine* for his stomacks sake and his often infirmities, 1 *Tim*. 5. 23. And *Amnon* had done well (of whom we read 2 *Sam*. 12. 28) if he had drunk no longer wine, but a little water for his souls sake and filthy lustfulness. Patience is betwixt *repining and raging* on the left hand, and a *stupified senslesness* on the right. *Self denial* 'twixt *self love*, resolving to lose nothing though God call for it; and self neglect or injury, in giving up all when we need not, as in the *vow* of *poverty*. *Spiritual joy* 'twixt a *drooping heavy spirit*, and a *carnal wanton profuse joy*.

The *fear* of God is a narrow path, between a (b) *slavish fear* on one side, and a *want* of *all fear* on the other; between the *spirit of bondage*, Rom. 8.

(a) Ῥάδιον μὲν τὸ ἀποτυχεῖν τοῦ σκοποῦ, χαλεπὸν δὲ τὸ ἐπιτυχεῖν. *Aristot. ubi supra, sed tendit in ardua virtus. Ovid.*

Sicut inter aquam, & ignem tenenda est via, ut nec exuratur homo nec demergatur; ita inter apicem vitiorum in excessu & inter voraginem eorundem in defectu, iter nostrum temperare debemus ne vel ad dextram vel sinistram declinemus Augustin.

(b) *Qui solo timore facit quod jubetur licet bonum facit non tamen bene facit. Sanctus* Aug. *de spir. & litera. Nemo invitus bene facit, etiamsi bonum est quod facit, invitus facit qui solo timore facit,* lib. confess. 1. c. 12.

Heb. 2. where *love* hath not predominion *above fear* and *fearleſneſs*, where *fear* hath not predominion above *ſecurity*.

7. As Chriſtian *graces*, ſo Chriſtian *duties* are *fenced within* the ſame *narrow* path. (a) To come *without preparation* to them, is to offer *indignity* to them; to ſpend *over much time* in it, is to *incroach* upon them. In *hearing*, we walk upon a *narrow bridge*, and *muſt take heed how we hear*; for we muſt neither *ſupercilioufly* or *irreverently* hear, becauſe it is (b) *God* that ſpeaks by *man*; nor muſt we *blindly* and *careleſly ſwallow all* we hear, becauſe it is but *Man* by whom God ſpeaks. In the duty of *Preaching*, we are neither on one hand, ſo to Preach the *law* and *damnation* as to *drive* men to *deſperation*; nor on the other, ſo to *manage the Goſpel* and the *ſweet promiſes*, as to *draw* them to *preſumption*: we muſt ſpeak as the *oracles* of God, and yet uſe *plains*; miniſter *milk*, and yet *ſtrong meat*. In reception of *the Lords Supper* I muſt ſtrike a middle path, betwixt *profane irreverence* and *ſuperſtitious adoration*. (c) In giving alms I muſt paſs between the *right* hand and the *left*.

(a) Before thou prayeſt prepare thy ſelf, and be not one that tempts the Lord, *Eccleſ.* 18. 23.

(b) *Luk.* 10. 16. *Non ſum propheta, non ſum Apoſtolus; & prophetæ & apoſtoli (audeo dicere) vice fungor: & quibus non æquor meritis, eorum implicor curis*, Bern. ſuper Cantic. Serm. 42.

(c) *Non ſe miſceat conſcientiæ tuæ laudis humanæ appetitus cum in eleemoſyna faciendâ divinum præceptum contendis implere.* Aug.

Diſputes and controverſies are the Churches convulſion fits.

Auream quiſquis mediocritatem diligit, tutus, &c. Hor. lib. 2. od. 10.

8. To him that *impartially* & *diligently* ſearches into the moſt *dark* and *difficult diſputes*, that do at this day trouble the Church, it will I think be apparent, that the truth lies in a mean betwixt two unſafe extreams. This I humbly conceive might be made appear in the difficulties concerning *Gods infallible foreſight*, and yet his *permiſſion* of what is *not pleaſing* to him. We need neither deny or impair Gods *purity* or *holineſs*, nor yet his *providence*; neither the *freedome of his grace*, nor yet that *freedome of will* which is neceſſary to a *rational* creature. The ſame may be ſaid of the controverſies concerning *unbelief*, *perfection in this life*, the *virtue* and *efficacy* of the *Sacraments*,

original

original ſin, Chriſts mediation, Gods juſtification of a ſinner, aſſurance of ſalvation, perſeverance in grace, the Lords day, and all the diſputes about *worſhip and diſcipline.* The middle path in all which and ſeveral others, though as to my private ſatisfaction I have tracted in ſome meaſure, yet *here* I muſt not do it, having already been too large upon the *genus* of a tender Conſcience, contrary to the rules of ſhort and poſitive diſcourſes; only my *intire love* to *moderation* (of which I crave pardon, if *it* keep not a *mean* alſo) hath drawn me out ſo far, *nor can* I paſs from it, till I have obſerved one thing more, *viz.*

Tene medium, ſi non vis perdere modum, locus medius tutus eſt, medium ſedes modi, & modus virtus, Bern. de conſid. lib. 3. cap. 10.

9. That amongſt all thoſe *ſeveral ways* of Chriſtian Religion (*oh that there were but one way, though upon condition I forfeited and loſt my life as often as there are ſeveral ways*) that ſeems the trueſt that ſtands in the middle betwixt what is *idolatrous* and what *profane*, what is *toyiſh* and *ſuperſtitious*, and what is *naked* and *rude*; holding to the Scriptures againſt the one, and to judgement and practice of *venerable antiquity*, where the Scriptures are dark, againſt the other. And for this, view one of the *pearls* that dropt from the *rich Pen* of our late *dear and dread Soveraign King Charles* the Martyr, in his ΕΙΚΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ, *a book ſo excellent for Wiſdome, Judgment, Piety, Charity, Eleganey, that it is worthy to be in the Hands, Head, and Heart of all Chriſtians*; In his Farewell Letter to the Prince of *Wales*, now our Gracious King, ſpeaking of the Religion eſtabliſht in the Church of *England*, his Majeſty gives it this Elogium.

Sancta eccleſia conſiſtit unitate fidelium, ſicut corpus unitate membrorum, Gregor. Mor. lib. 29.

Modicis rebus longius ævum eſt, Senec. Trag. in Agamem.

I have tryed it, and after much ſearch and many diſputes, have concluded it to be the beſt in the world, not only in the community as Chriſtian, but alſo in the ſpecial notion as reformed, keeping the middle way between the pomp of Superſtitious,

ous Tyranny, and the meaneſs of Phantaſtick Anarchy.

Kings ſtanding higher, ſee farther then other men in matters of Church and State.

CHAP. II.

Virtutibus homo diſponitur ad actiones ſuas quatenus a ratione movetur, donis vero quatenus movetur a Deo, Aquinas. *Virtus theologica.*

I. THis tenderneſs of Conſcience is a *gracious* mean, which diſtinguiſhes it from a *bare moral* virtue: For however there is a Conſcience in *every* man, as having the *law of nature* in his heart, ſo that a *mere natural* man or *Heathen*, may have ſome *kind* of tenderneſs of Conſcience; yet here I ſpeak of it as it is a *Chriſtian* virtue, and therefore call it a *gracious* mean.

Poſſunt aliqua bona fieri non benefacientibus a quibus fiunt, Auguſt. contra Julian. *Hypocritæ ſunt ſimulatores mali adjungentes ſe fictâ charitate captantes omnes motus omnia verba ſanctorum, in omnibus laqueos inquirentes.* St. Aug. in Pſal. 40.

2. *Chriſtian graces* do *eminently* contain under them all *moral virtues*, as the *reaſonable ſoul* contains the *ſenſitive* and *vegetative*. Moral virtues being alſo as the *ſtock*, and graces as the *grafts*: for as the *ſtock* may bring forth fruit, yet *harſh*, *not pleaſing*, *ſower*, *not acceptable* till it be grafted; ſo a *moral* man may bring forth much fruit, yet *not pleaſing* to God, till *grace* be *grafted* on him.

3. Therefore that tenderneſs which an *hypocrite* or carnal man pretends to, is not *true tenderneſs*, nor pleaſing to God: Yea the *more tender* ſuch a perſon makes himſelf, the *more ſeared* is his conſcience through hypocriſie. *Abſolom* 2 *Sam.* 15. 6. pretended much tenderneſs about his vow in *Hebron*, when his *intention*, were to *dethrone* his father. The graceleſs Phariſees did pretend a tenderneſs of the Sabbath, but their *intentions* was to *accuſe* our Saviour.

Mat. 12. 20.

4. Whence it follows, that the *more ſound* and *well grown* grace is in the heart, the *more tender* is the conſcience;

conſcience; and contrariwiſe the leſs grace, the leſs true tenderneſs. And for a *graceleſs* perſon to *pretend* to it, is as abſurd as for a *Dwarf* to pretend to *ſtature*, or a *lame* man to *agility*.

5. This therefore being a *gracious* diſpoſition, muſt neceſſarily have *God for the Author*, *or efficient cauſe*, which I did not *explicitly* lay down in the definition, as ſuppoſing that it is ſufficiently underſtood in the Genus: *James* 1. 17. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the father of lights, *&c.* *Dicendum quod Deus operatur in voluntate & natura ſicut cauſa prima in ſecundis*, Aquin. in Diſtinct. 24. lib. 2.

Quicquid ſanctum cogitaveris Dei munus eſt, Dei inſpiratio, Dei gratia, Ambr. de Abel & Cain cap. ult.

6. The *final cauſe* alſo may here be taken in, which is to keep us from ſinning againſt him. The conſcience being Gods *Commiſſioner* in the ſoul, to examine what we do, keeping therein a *petty Seſſions*, whereby preparation is made for the great Aſſize. The *tender* conſcience is a *faithful* judge, the *ſcrupulous* conſcience a *fooliſh*, the *wide*, *ſeared* conſcience a *corrupt bribed* judge. If *natura nil agit fruſtra*, much leſs the God of nature, who hath put this principle of nature into the ſoul of man.

Jer. 32. 40. *Panam ſemper ante oculos verſari putant, qui peccaverunt.* Cicer. pro milone. *Nudabitur pectoris mei conſcientia, & aperto corde videbuntur literæ peccatorum*, Orig. hom. 12

CHAP. III.

Of the right hand extream, viz *a ſcrupulous conſcience.*

SCrupulous is a *diminutive* of *ſcrupus*, which is a little *ſharp* piece of a *ſtone*; from whence ſomewhat *forcedly* ſome would have a *ſcrupulous conſcience* ſo called, becauſe as a *ſmall ſtone* in the *ſhoo* cauſes a man to *go* in *pain*, ſo a *ſcruple* in the *conſcience* is irkſome to him that *acts* and *ſcruples* at what he acts.

Scrupulus diminutivum à ſcrupus propriè eſt lapillus brevis & aſper qui in calceo lateus plerumque nos ledit, nam preſſus pede ſolli crudinem creat Altenſt. vocab.

But

But more probably it seems so termed from *scrupulus*, which is one of the *least weights*, because *such* a conscience stumbles at things of the *least weight* or moment, not worth our while to trouble our thoughts with it.

2. A *scrupulous* conscience is that which sticks at *small* and *trivial* things, upon *small* and *trivial* reasons.

3. I call those things *small* and *trivial*, which are in their own nature *meerly indifferent*; or if they have *some degree* of *evil* or *good*, are *not discovered* so to be in a *clear* way to him that scruples at them: in which reguard if not in *themselves*, *yet as to him* they are *trival*.

4. Those *reasons* or *arguments* I call *trivial*, which in the judgement of *common reason* (*not clouded with passion*) together with *common illumination*, have no force or strength in them.

5. *Common reason* is that which *every* man is indowed with, who is *compos mentis*, and *grown up to years of discretion*; and that *common illumination*, which every Christian is endowed with, who may be thought *fit to partake of the Lords Supper*, as to matter of *knowledge*.

6. *Instances* of a scrupulous conscience many may be given; these few may serve for a tast. To scruple in *extream thirst* to *drink* in *that cup*, which another hath drunk in to *excess*; to scruple to go *a mile* to the Church on the *Sabbath*, because there is *labour* in it. To stick at *eating fish* on a *fasting* day, because *some* refuse to *eate flesh* on *that* day; to stick at *uncovering* the *head* or *bowing* the *knee* to a *superiour*, because we give such worship to God.

In like manner for a *candidat* or *inceptor* to scruple at putting on, suppose, a *Master of Arts Cap*, *Gown*, *Hood* or *Habit*, because some such like habiliments were in use before the Reformation; nor can I think that *many* of the *Presbyterian* way, do *really* scruple at

Dubia plus torquent mala, Sen. Trag. in Agamem.

Res mediæ dicuntur, quæ per se sive ex sua naturâ simpliciter æstimatæ, nec bonæ nec malæ sunt ut esca, & potus, & similia, Beza epist. ad peregrinarum in Anglia ecclesiarum fratres.

To scruple to set our foot cross over a straw in the high way for fear of making the figure of the Cross.

Eo demùm veniet, ut super transversam (quam dicitur) festucam incedere nefas ducat Calv. Instit. lib. 3. c. 19. Sect. 7.

at a *white garment* in Divine Service: for if there were any *colour* of ſin in a *colour* (which in truth there is *not*) *red* ſhould have *more of* ſin in it then *white*, to which the *deepeſt died ſins* are compared, *Iſa.* 1. 18. *Rev* 17. 3. Juſtification being compared to the *whiteneſs* of *wool* and *ſnow*; and *ſanctification to linnen pure and white*, Rev. 19. 8.

Yet the *chief* and *leading* men of that way, did at certain times in the ſight of many thouſands, wear *Skarlet Gowns* and *Hoods* in the Univerſities, not only at *Diſputations* and *Congregations*, but at *ſermons*, *yea* (if I miſtake not) did *preach ad Clerum* in their *ſcarlet Copes*, one of the *graveſt habits* in the world, and much uſed in one of the Univerſities at ſolemn times. Wherein a man may wonder, as why they ſhould not ſcruple as much at ſcarlet as as at white; ſo much more, why they ſhould ſtumble more at white of linnen, then at the white of *miniver* wherewith *that habit* is largely indorſed.

Of *School-writers*, none that I know ſpeaks more to the purpoſe then *Antoninus*, from whom ſome Modern Writers ſeem to borrow that little that they have upon that ſubject. Firſt he ſhews the *ſeveral names* given to ſcrupulofity: ſome call it (ſays he) *puſillanimity*, ſome *fear of conſcience*, ſome an *erroneous conſcience*; and gives this definition. *Eſt vacillatio quædam conſurgens cum formidine ex aliquibus conjecturis debilibus & incertis. i. e.* A wavering of mind riſing in us, with fear upon ſome uncertain and weak conjectures.

A quibuſdem vocatur erronea conſcientia, ab aliis timor conſcientiæ, ab aliis puſillanimitas, Anton. Sum. part. 1. Tract. 3 c. 10. Sect. 9.

He after diſtinguiſhes betwixt *fides*, *ſcientia*, *opinio*, *dubitatio*, and *ſcrupulus*; and tells us that a doubting conſcience, is *pendulous* betwixt both parts; but a *ſcrupulous faſtens upon one* part drawn by weak reaſons. I ſee but little difference betwixt *vacillatio* and *dubitatio*, nor is it neceſſary either to conceive of

Secundum Albertum in libro de quatuor cœvis, differentia eſt inter ſcientiam, fidem, opinionem, dubitationem, & ſcrupulum ſeu ſuſpicionem ——— Demum ſcrupulus ex levibus conjecturis ſeu mediis, & multum debilibus movetur ad unam partium, ibid.

a dubious conſcience as not faſtning, becauſe when it doth ſo it may be doubting, nor doth a ſcrupulous conſcience ſeem always to cloſe with one part. Having after laid down the *effects* of ſcrupuloſity, he proceeds to the *cauſes*, viz. *melancholy* hurting the brain; *temptation* from Satan ſtirring up the melancholy humors, and he produces *Avicenna* ſo teaching; ſometimes overmuch *faſting* and *watching*, ſometimes the ſociety of ſcrupulous perſons, one being apt to poſſeſs another with ſcruples. (*a*) Next he proceeds to the *remedies* of it: As 1. That they ſhould not be over harſhly reproved: he ſhould have added (*b*) except the *ſcruple* be *dangerous* to Church or State. 2. That they ſhould be perſwaded to lay it aſide. 3. (*c*) Diligently ſearch the Scriptures, *Jam.* 1. *If any man lack wiſdome*, &c. 4. By Godly ſorrow to prepare for the receiving the grace of God. 5. By *ſubjecting* their underſtanding and judgments to their *Superiors* in wiſdome and office, *Prov.* 3. *Lean not to thine own underſtanding*: He cites to this purpoſe the words of the *learned Chancellour of* Paris, *Unum hoc damus generale documentum*, viz. *facile, credere ſapientium & bonorum judicio, & contra communes eorum ſententias non leviter ſibi formare ſcrupulos anxios & timidos.* We give this general inſtruction, eaſily to yield to the judgement of wiſe and good men, and not lightly to frame to our ſelves troubleſome ſcruples againſt their common judgement. And if a ſcrupulous perſon ſhall ſay, *Utinam talis eſſet prælatus noſter qualis* Bernardus, *crederem faciliter imperanti, & acquieſcerem conſulenti.* If our Church-governour were ſuch a one as *Bernard*, I would believe eaſily what he ſhould tell me, and reſt in what he ſhall counſel me. He anſwers, *Erras, debes illi obedire non ut homini ſed ut Deo, cujus vices gerit: nam Chriſtus dicit qui vos audit me audit.* Thou erreſt, for thou oughteſt to obey him not as man,

Cauſatur quandoque ex complexione ad timorem idonea, viz. frigidâ: quandoque ex egritudine manica, vel melancholicâ--per quam læditur imaginatio--cauſatur ex tentatione diabolica, & ex ſocietate timidorum.

(*a*) *Non debent ſcrupuloſi durè corripi ſed animari ad deponendum puſillanimitatem & ſcrupulum.*

(*b*) Of which danger our governours are Judges.

(*c*) *Debita ad gratiam Dei præparatio, Sollicita ſacræ Scripturæ indagatio: orationis devota continuatio opinionis alicujus tuta electio: obedientia humilis imitatio: ſcrupulorum animoſa abjectio, diſcreta præceptorum interpretatio.*

but

but as God, in whose stead he is; thus far *Antonine* Arch-bishop of *Florence*.

8. By what *he* writes, or *others* from him, themselves, or others, it is manifest there *is such a thing* as a scrupulous conscience; that this conscience is *anxious*, and no doubt in some degree *dubious*, there being little difference betwixt *dubitatio & vacillatio*; that this scrupulosity is a *sin* in whomsoever it is, as proceeding from evil causes, *viz. ignorance*, *errour*, or *instability* of mind, or *pride*, some affecting and professing scrupulosity. For by this they make that to be sin, which else had been none; *faciunt sibi peccata, ubi non sunt peccata*, says one, It proceeds also from other ill causes aforesaid.

Say to them that are of a fearful heart be strong, *Isa.* 35. 4.

9. There is a *kind* or rather *show* of conscience, which some call a *perverse* or preposterous conscience; such was that of the Pharisees *Mat* 23. 23. who paid tithes of *mint, annis*, &c. and neglected, *&c.* who strained at a Gnat and swallowed a Camel, *Mat.* 23. 24. Or to give a more modern, and too well known an instance, to be so *narrow throated* as to *strain* at the *Churches Prayers*, and to be so *wide throated* as to *swallow* the *Churches Lands*; to scruple to give a *penny* to the building or repairing of a *Church*, a thing laudable, pious, and necessary, and to stick at no cost towards the dethroning and destroying of their Soveraign, a thing unnatural and impious. But this being but an *hypocritical pretense* of conscience, cannot be referred to this head, which treats of *real* scrupulosity.

Disc. de temp.-- Conscientia mala est conscientia perversa, quam habent qui peccata parva ponderunt, magnanon curant: minima observatis, maxima contemnitis. Aug. quæst. evang. lib. 1. qu. 35.

CHAP. IV.

Of the left hand extream, viz. a wide, loose, and seared conscience.

Conscientia dilatata quam habent illi qui non ponderant crassiora peccata & de communibus non curant. Disc. de temp. Ser. 9.

1. A *Wide* or *loose* Conscience, is that which is not tenderly sensible of having done, nor tenderly wary of doing what is clearly and manifestly evil, out of an inward principle.

Rom. 13. wrath and conscience are distinguisht.

2. If a man forbear evil to be done, or is troubled for evil done, only because it is *punisht* or *punishable* by *humane laws*, this is not tenderness. And therefore looseness of conscience is chiefly seen and discern'd in the commission and admission of such sins, without remorse or regard, which conscience and the fear of God should restrain, and are not punisht by humane laws, or if so, do not easily or speedily come to humane cognizance.

3. Whence it follows, that looseness of conscience is most discover'd in secret sins, and consequently more discernible to a mans self then to another, till it break out into open enormities without open signs of a wounded or troubled soul.

4. That which some Divines call a *sleepy* or *dull* conscience, is but a farther degree of a loose conscience; for when men have *inured* themselves to sin against conscience, this (a) custome takes away quickness of sense. Yet is not a stupified conscience without some degree of *feeling* when God awakens it either with a *powerful word* Act. 2. 37. they were *pricked* in their *heart*, and said men and brethren what shall we do? or with a *powerful work*, as in *Pharaohs* case *Exod.* 9. 27. I and my people are sinful. For as such who are *Lethargical* are not easily awakened, but by some *great noise*, so neither is a sluggish conscience without a powerful word or work of God.

(a) *Si autem vincere & imperare consueverunt laboriosa difficultate superantur.* Aug. de civ. Dei lib. 21. c. 16.

5. The

5. The *seared* conscience seems to be the highest degree of a loose or wide conscience, *Eph.* 4. 19. who being past feeling, *&c.* 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. having their conscience seared with an hot iron. For as that which hath been *seared* feels nothing, so neither doth a seared conscience, till it feels hell fire; and it is commonly the effect of an hypocritical profession of the faith, or of a wicked departure from the faith.

6. The *cauterized* conscience as it is of the *same species* with a wide and loose conscience may be called a *degree* of it, yea the highest degree: as it *proceeds from* looseness it may be an *effect* of it; as it increases looseness and widens the conscience, it may be a *cause* of it.

Cauterium est corruptio in carne per quem, ex qua egreditur continua putredo. Aquinas in 1 Tim. 4.

7. Of all the judgments of God in this life, it is the *greatest* to be given up to such a searedness or reprobate sense. For however Desperation continued in, cuts off from all mercy, yet is a seared conscience no less desperate, keeping off a sence of sin, and therein any due sense of mercy. From which miserable estate the Lord deliver us.

CHAP. V.

Of the difference of a tender conscience from other graces nearest and likest to it.

1. IT thus differs from the *fear* of *God*, that this properly respects the (*m*) *future* Jer. 32. 40. I will put my *fear* into their heart, that they *shall not depart* from me; but tenderness of conscience respects as well the time *past* as the *future*. The *fear* of

(m) *Job* 1. 1. fear'd God and eschewed evil. *Qui hanc habet omnem odit iniquitatem--per hunc timorem Dei universa deserimus, mundo abrenunciamus, nosque ipsos (sicut Dominus ait) abnegamus nobis.* Bern. de don. Sp. sancti ser. 31 c. 1.

God

Ecclesiastic. 1. 21. The fear of the Lord drives away sin.

God seems to be the *cause* of a tender conscience, *Gen.* 39. 9. how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

2. It differs from *penitential contrition*, as this respects actions *past*, but *tenderness* things also *future*; and (as in the former) contrition seems to be some *cause* of tenderness, the heart never being truly tender, till it be a broken and a contrite heart.

2 *Cor.* 7. 11. that ye sorrowed after a godly sort what carefulness it wrought in you.

3. It differs from *vigilancy*, this being principally exercised about our *temptations*, and such other dangers, but tenderness about the good or evil of our actions.

4. It differs not only from a scrupulous conscience, but from a dubious; this *hæsitating* betwixt assent and dissent, that firmly bent against any manifest evil.

CHAP. VI.

Of the quick sense of a tender conscience, being the *formalis ratio* of it.

A distinction somewhat like is in *Aristot. lib.* 7. *Ethic. c.* 10. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ φρόνησις ἐπιτακτική ἐστιν ἡ δὲ σύνεσις κριτικὴ μόνον. *Solum dicitur practicus, dum ad factibilia & agibilia inferiora convertitur.* Gerson.

1. THis sensibility is a *quick motion* of the practical understanding in a *suddain check* of something done, or a *suddain stop* at something to be done.

2. The *practical understanding* is a power of the soul, which apprehends things *in ordine ad opus*, in order to some operation, as the *speculative* understanding *in ordine ad scientiam*, in order to something to be known. For example, the speculative understanding considers of hearbs, as having such virtues and operations in them, the practical, whether I should for such purposes *use* such simples, and in what manner to use them. The theorical intel-

lect

lect conſiders of marriage as it is the ordinance of God, as a great myſtery, as a means of the propagation of mankind: the practical intellect, conſiders of entring or refuſing ſuch or ſuch a marriage. A Judge upon the Bench makes uſe of his *theorick* intellect, when he *diſcourſes* of the Laws and Statutes what they allow or forbid; he makes uſe of the *practick* power, when he examines and condemns malefactors by the law.

3. Whence it is a *rule* in Philoſophy, *Intellectus theoricus conquieſcit in notitia principiorum, intellectus practicus in notitia ſingularium.* Upon which is grounded the diſtinction of a (a) *contemplative* and an *active* life.

4. The quick motion of this *practical* underſtanding is imperated by the *will truly ſanctified*, which lays a general charge upon all the faculties, above all things what ever they do to keep all ſin out of the ſoul.

——— Cum magna horreas
Quæ poſſe fieri non putes metuas tamen.
Senec. trag. in OEdip.

(a) *Vita humana in activam & contemplativam dividitur, quæ quidem attenditur ſecundum intellectum. Intellectus autem dividitur per activum & contemplativum.* Aquin. 22. qu. 179. art. 2.

CHAP. VII.

Of the immediate object of a tender Conſcience.

1. THE *object* of this ſenſibility or tenderneſs, is *about* (b) *doing* or *having done* any thing which is *clearly evil*, and conſequently of omitting or having omitted any thing which is truly good.

2. The *abſolute* and *primary* rule of evil and good to a tender conſcience, is the *expreſs* and *clear* Word of God rightly underſtood; for every thing in ſome particular

(b) *Conſcientia eſt actus quo ſcientiam noſtram ad ea quæ agimus applicamus.* Aqu. 1. part. q. 79. art. 13.

particular places forbidden or commanded is not the rule.

3, I call Gods Word the *primary* and *absolute* rule, because other rules there are which bind the conscience, but they do it by the *virtue* of the *absolute* rule.

4. Those *secondary* rules of conscience, as some Divines both lately and formerly have noted, are 1. The Laws, Orders, and Mandates of our Superiours. 2. Our own spontaneous *vows* and *promises*. 3. The consideration of *offence* towards a weak Brother, which in some cases is a direction to conscience.

5. Whereas the late Reverend and Judicious Bishop *Sanderson* (who doth not deal in his Cases upon this my subject save only upon the rule of conscience in one place) asserts that the *Scripture* is not the *adæquate rule* of conscience, but the *will* of God in what way soever revealed to men; that I may not seem to leave out any thing necessary to the definition of the rule, nor to thwart what that worthy Casuist hath written, I conceive I have both fully and fitly comprized all under those words, *The Word of God rightly understood*. For speaking only of the tender conscience of a *Christian*, and not a mere *natural* man, I have no occasion to take in the (*a*) law of nature by it self, as one way of revelation; there being nothing commanded or prohibited in the *law of nature*, which is not more *explicitely* and *excellently* to be found in the *Scripture*, which doth *eminently* contain in it the law of nature. And whereas extraordinary, particular, private revelations, are *not* to be *expressed*, but (*b*) *suspected* when pretended, I make them no certain part of the rule. But as to the way of revelation, which is by instructions and consequences drawn out of Scripture, I have

(a) *Lex vetus distinguitur a lege naturæ non tanquam ab ea omnino aliena, sed tanquam ei aliquid superaddens. Sicut enim gratia præsupponit naturam, ita oportet quod lex divina præsupponat legem naturalem.* Aquin. 12. qu. 99. art. 2.

(b) *Non dicat ideo verum esse — quia ille frater noster, vel illa soror nostra tale visum vigilans aut dormiens somniavit.* Aug. de unitate ecclesiæ.

touched

couched it under these words: *Rightly understood.* For he that rightly understands a Text, knows the scope of it, and he that knows what that Text truly and properly teaches, by what means soever.

6. One of the *secondary* rules of evil and good to the conscience, is the *Laws* and *Mandates* of our Rulers and Governours; these (a) bind by the power and virtue of the primary rule, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. Submit your selves to every ordinance of man, for the Lords sake: πάσῃ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει to every *humane creature*, as it sounds in the *Greek*. *Estius* thus, to every man being Gods creature, as *Mark.* 6. preach the Gospel to every creature, *i. e.* to every man; yet as there is a *restriction* there to be understood, not to infants or distracted persons, so here is a restriction; for we are not bound to submit to every man, but to such as are in authority. But *Heinsius* a Protestant and a learned Critick, tells us, That it is very properly rendered to every *humane ordinance*. For the *Hellenists Ecclesiasticus* 38. 12. write thus; καὶ ἰατρῷ δὸς τόπον καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἔκτισε κύριος, Give place to the Physician, for God hath ordain'd him. Though we use not the *Apocryphal Books* as a *ground* of *faith*, yet there are many excellent things in them; and beside, the Greek Apocrypha gives light to divers *dark places* in the *New Testament*, being a kind of *Hebraizing Greek*; and therefore to distinguish it from other Greek, called by *Jos. Scaliger*, and some other Criticks, the *Hellenists Greek*, as is also the LXX. of the Canonical Books in the Old Testament. Nor shall a man ever come to the true meaning of some of the darkest places of the New Testament, that is not well versed in the *Hellenists*. Another Text is in *Rom.* 13. 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.

(a) *Omnis legislativa potestas descendit à potestate supremâ i. e. divina — quicquid igitur committitur contra legem humanam idem etiam fit contra legem ei. — Qui hoc etiam præcipit ut illi potestati obediatur. — Non enim fingi potest præcipiendo potestas sine obligatione obediendi.* Tit. 3. 1. Estius in Sentent. lib. 2. dist. 36.

7. They therefore that are still *opposing* these *subordinate* rules one to another, submit to neither; for

opposition is not to be made, but when man commands or ordains something *contrary* to the ordinance and commandments of God, and then the rule holds *Act.* 5. 19. we ought to obey God rather then man: Or when men *thrust out* Gods laws, and *place* their own in their room, as *Mat.* 15. 9. They taught doctrines, the commandments of men, that is, they shut out the *fifth Commandement*, and brought in their *Corban* into the room of it, *v.* 4, 5, 6. Or lastly, when they shall bring in any thing as of God directly and immediately which is not, or as an essential part to his worship which he hath not prescribed. In which sense *Tertullian* is to be understood, *Nobis nihil ex nostro arbitrio indulgere liceat, sed nec eligere quod aliquis ex arbitrio suo induxerit.* Bern. de præcept. & disp. c. 12.

Ubi hoc jubet pater quod contra Deum non sit, sic audiendus est quomodo Deus quia obedire patri jussit Deus. Aug. conc. 1. in Psal. 70.

Quicquid vice Dei Prælatus præcipit, quod non sit certum displicere Deo, haud secus accipiendum, quam si præcipiat ipse Deus.

8. The *second secondary* rule of evil or good, is a *lawful vow*. This also binds by virtue of the absolute and primary rule. *Deut.* 23. 21. When thou shalt vow a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it. See *Psal.* 76. 11. *Eccles.* 5. 4, 5. *Act.* 5. 4.

Ad secundum præceptum (verius ad tertium) reducitur omnis votlatio voti. Estius lib. 3. dist. 39.

9. The *third secondary* rule is in case of offence, but it is, when the things are such as neither Gods Law nor Mans tyes us to: we having liberty to leave or use them 1 *Cor.* 8. 9. But take heed this *liberty* of yours become not a stumbling block to them that are weak.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the clearness of the primary rule,

1. THis rule I have asserted in the former Chapter to be the *express* and *clear* Word of God.

2. Those portions of Gods Word I call *express* and *clear*,

clear, which if they concern us that are Christians, are not obnoxious to *divers interpretations or criticisms* invalidating any certain sense.

3. Therefore where a text admits of *divers probable* interpretations, or is by critical observation carried beside the vulgar sense, there can be no rule of good or evil to the conscience.

4. The reason is, because that which becomes the true object of the speculative intellect, which searches what is true or false, cannot be the object nor rule of the practical intellect, till the speculative hath resolved it.

5. Not that I think the *maxime* of the Canon-law applicable to this: *Quæ in testamento ita scripta sunt ut intelligi non possunt, perinde sunt ac si scripta non essent*; because, however it be in mans Testament, in Gods Testaments, it is Scripture still, though the meaning be not certainly known.

6. In places therefore *dubious* and *difficult*, it is not good sense to say, my *conscience tells* me this or that is the sense of such a Text, because conscience is manifestly seated in the practical intellect, whose work is not to find out true or false in any matter.

7. Yet where the (a) *Church* hath authoritatively given the interpretation of dubious places, a tender conscience should be tender of rejecting it, as both *charitably* and *dutifully* hoping that the Church would not give an interpretation, either contrary to other expres Scriptures, the Analogy of faith, or to the consent of the Universal Church in the most pure and antient times of it.

(a) But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken to me, *Ezek.* 3. 7.

8. Nor is it less then *equity*, that if the people trust the Church first in *setting out* the *bounds* of *Canonical Scripture* against such as would (b) adde or (c) substract: Secondly, in *translating* it against such

(b) The Romanists.

(c) *Si & Petrus accedat— locus ex epistola ejus prior, quæ sola genuina est*, &c. *Petrus quoque vetus auctor epistolæ posteriori quæ sub Petri nomine jam olim vulgata est* &c. Walo Messalinus (alias Salmasius) de Episcopis, & Presbyteris, and others besides him.

as would *lock* it up, they should also chearfully and gratefully receive the Churches interpretation, it being *not imaginable* to an *ingenuous* and *charitable* man, that they who have been faithful and industrious in *fixing the Canon* and translating it, would be careless and deceitful in the *interpretation*.

9. I do therefore (but with humble submission to the judgment of the Church) affirm that a tender conscience being guided in her rule by the *Churches translation*, may also be guided by *her interpretation*.

10. But besides *ambiguous* places there is *clear* Scripture enough to shew us what is good and what is evil. *Deut* 30. 15. See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. But more pregnantly *Mic.* 6. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man! what is good, *&c.*

11 Yet may *clear* places be *obscured* by *unsound interpretations*, and *by none* more then by over *lax* and *large synechdoches*. For of all places, the moral law is most clear, yet are the synechdoches some make, so large, that a man knows not when he breaks them or keeps them.

12. Above the rest of the moral law, none seems more clog'd with the trope aforesaid, then *the second Commandment*. So that as they are guilty of one gross extream, who *expunge* it out of the decalogue, so they in some degree of another, that have overmuch inlarged it. For if it must be extended to all *inventions of men*, whereby they cloath the worship of God with *fitting circumstantials*, we cannot stir a foot, but we must stumble over some graven image. Then is the tolling a Bell, the turning a Glass, the tuning a Psalm, or almost any thing else, not expressly commanded, a graven image. Then is every Christian Congregation in the world a Congregation of Idolaters, which is grosly absurd.

13. By what therefore hath been said in this and the former Chapters it is manifest, that the ob-

ject

ject of the tender conſcience is *clear* or *manifeſt* evil or good.

14. Therefore *bare reſemblances* of evil, are not the object of tenderneſs. Nor is that place 1 *Theſ.* 5. 22. Abſtain from every appearance of evil, ſo to be underſtood. Becauſe if that were the ſenſe, mans life ſhould be a *perpetual thraldome*; εἶδος alſo is as well kind as appearance: and *Eſtius* ſays well, it is the ſame with that *Ch.* 4. 12. to walk honeſtly towards them without: many good things carry a *reſemblance* of evil, as diligence in callings of covetuouſneſs; cheerfulneſs of levity; reſervedneſs of anger, lawful recreations of voluptuouſneſs; and commonly all vertues and graces of ſome one extream.

15. The *reſtrictions* are theſe. 1. It muſt be *clearly* evil of which it is an *appearance*. 2. Such an appearance it muſt be as doth neceſſarily *inferre* us *guilty*, or that we *love* or like that evil 3. Such an appearance as we have *freedome* to forbear.

16. There is but one conſideration more in the object, *viz.* that a tender conſcience is converſant about the evil and good of our *own* actions, and not of other mens; for however grief may ariſe in our hearts for the miſdoings of others, yet can it not be called trouble of conſcience, but ſorrow of mind.

Yet is the tender Conſcience tender of another mans conſcience, 1 *Cor.* 10. 29. conſcience I ſay not thine own, but of the others. *Vid. pag. ult. Gal.* 6. 4. But let every man prove his own work.

CHAP. IX.

Of the ſubject of a tender conſcience.

THe *remote* ſubject is (as hath been ſhewed) the practical intellect in the ſoul and the will, but more approximately, a regenerate and ſanctified ſoul. For if the fear of God and true ſoftneſs of heart, are only

only subjected in a regenerated soul, so likewise is this.

2. Tenderness therefore is not only the *adjunct* of such a soul, but the *adequate* adjunct of it, and therefore is *reciprocated* with the subject, so that there is no regenerate man without a tender conscience, no tender conscience but in a regenerate man, as it is a gracious disposition.

Tit. 1. 15. But to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

3. Hence it is as *ridiculous* for a wicked man as a theif, a perjured person, or traitor, to pretend to tenderness of conscience, as for a *beast* to pretend to *rationality*. If two thieves should rob a man, and one perswade to murder him, and the other refuse and hinder, it is not tenderness of conscience properly in him, but either some degree of *good nature*, or *Gods restraining* grace, or *fear* of a divine hand of punishment, that frequently finds out murderers. Conscience is as truly tender of *theft*, as of *murder*, *Gen.* 37. 22. when *Reuben* said, shed no blood, it cannot be thought such a tenderness in him, who was not afraid to defile his fathers bed.

4. To conclude this, the sanctified soul in regard of this adjunct, is not only *subjectum recipiens ad se*, but *in se*. Tenderness hath an *inherence* in such a soul, and cannot be sever'd from it, how ever at some times it may be more *dull* then at other.

CHAP. X.

Of the adjuncts of a tender Conscience.

THe adjuncts, properties, or the effects of this holy disposition will serve for the marks or characters of it by which it may in some sort be discovered where it is.

1. A *proportionality* to the *object*. The *greater* the evil, the *more* tender the conſcience: Thoſe evils eſpecially it moſt checks us for and keeps us from, which are, 1. Moſt *diſhonourable* to God and his Goſpel. 2. Such as *moſt wound* the conſcience. Thoſe that moſt diſhonour God and his Goſpel, are ſins againſt the *Laws* of *Nature*, *Nations*, and *Humane Society*, ſuch as are breach of our faith and promiſes, (eſpecially when it is publick) perjuries, and above all, *treaſons*. In the late times, when men ſaw no puniſhment, but rather incouragement to all diſloyalty, conſcience ſhould have reſtrained them, for the actions of thoſe times were diſhonourable to Chriſt in the ſight of unbelievers, to the reformed religion in the ſight of other profeſſions, to the Engliſh Nation in the ſight of all Nations. 2. The ſins that moſt wound the conſcience are breach of vows, oathes, when lawful for the matter, and impoſed by lawful authority, ſuch as the oaths of Allegeance and Supremacy were, but the *Covenant was not*.

And after that King *Nebuchadnezzar* had made him to ſwear by the name of the Lord he forſwore himſelf and rebelled. 1 *Eſdr.* 1. 48.

2. Tenderneſs is ever joyned with a *propenſity* to Gods publick worſhip. (*a*) I never in all my life knew a conſciencious perſon, but did love Gods worſhip in his houſe, and the more conſciencious the more conſtant in it and to it. (*b*) They that can ſit at home without neceſſity *whole* Lords days, nay *many months* together, ſhew from the *coldneſs* of their affections to their God that their conſciences are not tender but *benummed*, or rather ſeared.

(a) *Chriſtiana libertas non eſt vaga & effrenis licentia qua qui quid lubet, pro noſtro arbitrio agamus aut omittamus--- ſed eſt liberatio à maledictione legis, & a jugo legalium ceremoniarum per Chriſtum.* Beza Epiſt. 24.

(b) *Is abutitur Chriſtianæ libertatis beneficio, vel potius adhuc venundatus eſt ſub peccato, qui vel ſua magiſtratibus ve præpoſitis ſponte non paret in Domino.* Thed. Beza. ibid.

It is no argument, but a *pitiful ſhift* in too many to cover idleneſs, pride, diſdain of the miniſterial

Facti abimuſne libertatem conſcientiis permittendam eſſe? minimè ut hæc quidem libertas intelligitur, i. e. quo quiſque modo volet eum colat. Eſt enim hoc mevelè abolitionis dogma, ſinendum eſſe unumquemque ut ſi volet pereat. Beza epiſt.

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office, and perhaps ſomething worſe, to ſay, I cannot come to Church: I underſtand not the meaning of ſuch a *ceremony*, I approve not of ſuch *prayers*, I like not the *calling*, *gifts*, or *diſpoſition* of ſuch a miniſter, I like not joyning in aſſembly *with* profane perſons.

Doctor *Ames*, a known enemy of the Church-government here, and ſomething inclining to the *New England* mode, in his Book *de conſcientia*, Chap. 4. ſpeaks thus: If any through errour of conſcience ſhould judge it unlawful to be preſent at the Church aſſembly, becauſe he knows the Miniſter to be a bad-man, and imagines he ſhall by his preſence there partake with his improbity, he ſins much more by keeping away, then by being preſent; becauſe it is a far greater ſin to neglect the worſhip of God, then to communicate with anothers improbity, except a man by being preſent were forced to commit idolatry. Thus *Ameſius*.

Si quis per conſcientiæ errorem, illi eitum judicaret intereſſe cætui eccleſiæ, cui alias tenetur adeſſe, quia miniſtrum illius eccleſiæ improbum hominem eſſe novit, & ſe communicaturum putat cum ejus improbitate, ille magis peccat abſtinendo, quam ſi adeſſet, quia gravius eſt peccatum negligere cultum Dei quam communicare cum alterius improbitate perſonali in illo cultu. Ames. de conſc. cap. 4.

But noman in our aſſemblies is forced to practice or behold any ſuch thing as idolatry. Nor doth he that is preſent where ſinners are at Gods worſhip, communicate therefore with them in their ſins, any more then by living in the ſame Pariſh with them. The ancient non-conformiſts were all of this judgement, and ſo are generally if not totally the Divines of the Presbyterian judgment at this day. Fearful no doubt is their ſin, and ſo it will appear at the laſt day, to refrain Gods publick Ordinances upon ſuch pretences; much more upon pride, lazineſs, and hatred of Church-men and Church-government.

Atheiſts.

No greater contemners of God, then ſuch as contemn his publick worſhip and ſervice, who give not unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, that bring not an offering, nor come before him to wor-

1 *Chron.* 16. 29.

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ſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs: Who worſhip not the Lord in his ſanctuary, nor delight to give thanks to him in a great congregation or praiſe him among much people: more Atheiſm and contempt of the divine Majeſty they cannot ſhew, except they ſhould proclaim it in every Market, or write it upon every Wall, that there is no God. And if it be not timouſly prevented, a deluge of *Heathenism* and *Atheiſm* will quickly ruſh in upon us. Divers there are that have not been at Church for many years, nor do they at all uſe or frequent the Sectarian Aſſemblies or any other, but ſit at home following their own occaſions. Others not ſo bad, come to the publick Aſſemblies, but very rarely, very unconſtantly. Some come reaſonable duly, but it is only as *hearers*; they never partake of the Lords Supper, though never ſo earneſtly invited and perſwaded; they are ſo bold as to plead againſt it, as a thing needleſs and unprofitable; they commonly urge the danger of unworthy participation, and the difficulty of ſelf-examination as a reaſon of Non-Communion. They would make the world believe that Chriſt hath given ſome dangerous law to his Church, whoſe yoke is eaſie and burden is light. And ſome of this ſort, the younger ſort eſpecially come (as by their carriage it appears) partly to gaze, to feed their wanton ſenſes, to talk and diſcourſe of vanities, even then whilſt God is ſpeaking to them in his Word; yea, which is worſe, to manifeſt and make known to all how little they regard the oracles of God: ſuch an heap of libertiniſm have the late *Anarchical confuſions* left ſtill behind them. Inſomuch that what with the Atheiſtical practiſes of ſome who own no Church; the cold and looſe dealing of others that own it at their leaſure; and the dividing practiſes of a conſiderable number who frequent none but ſuch as are private; the publick worſhip of God, the glory and ſtrength, the beauty and ſecurity of a Nation is ſadly eclipſed. But I hope it

Pſal. 29. 12.

Pſal. 35. 18.

is *but in an eclipſe*, and ſo will again recover. Lord let not the Gates of *Sion* mourn, which thou loveſt more then all the dwellings of *Jacob* ! If it be thy goodneſs to thy Church, that her Teachers ſhall not be removed into a corner, but her eyes ſhall behold them, it is no leſs, that her people ſhall not remove into corners, but that her Teachers eyes ſhall behold their people.

Iſa. 30. 20.

I deny not but ſuch may be the Churches exigency, as that ſhe may for ſome time and in ſome degree, bear with ſuch as are erroneous and ſcrupulous, when it is for the good and ſafety of the ſound part of the Church; but this I preſume not to deal upon. All that I preſume to ſay (and none can blame me for it) is this: They that own our rule, but not our principles and diſcipline, have leſs to plead for their ſeparation; and they that own both our rule, principles and diſcipline, have nothing to plead; abhorring Sectarian principles, yet ſhrowding themſelves under their practices.

Atheiſts and Libertins.

3. However ſuch a conſcience is tender of all divine laws, yet is it in a more peculiar and remarkable manner tender of Chriſts *new* and *great Commandement* of *Love*, and conſequently of his injunction ſo earneſtly and frequently inculcated by the Apoſtle, to beware of making *Schiſms*, *Diviſions*, and *Separations*. He hath no tender conſcience that is not tender and fearful of making breaches and parties in the Church of God.

4. A tender conſcience is tender of another mans conſcience. Some that former years profeſſed tenderneſs about a *White Garment*, about Kneeling and Standing Geſtures, &c. when they had got the power into their own hands, had no mercy on the conſciences of their brethren that had a thouſand times more cauſe to be tender and wary of *taking* the *Cove-*

It was mine own lot to have the Covenant tendered me ſo ſoon as Printed, and upon my abſolute refuſal, to be exiled from my Flock, *March* 2. 1643. and put to ſad exigencies.

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nant; but they who had ſtrained at the former *gnats*, did not only ſwallow the *Covenant Camel*, but did endeavour to cram and ram it down the throats of their brethren, *wrenching open* their *jaws* with the *cold* and *harſh key* of poverty and ruin; and which was worſe, making ſuch ſcandalous that ſhould refuſe it, how *unwarrantable* ſoever from the impoſers and compoſers, how *unſuitable* ſoever for the matter to ſound and ſworn principles, and how *pernicious* ſoever in the ends and effects of it.

5. It is tender of *both* Tables of the Law. If it will not admit of *profaneſs*, neither will it of *unrighteouſneſs*. If it be tender of an *idle* and *vain oath*, it is no leſs of *detraction*; if of *neglecting* the *Sabbath*, ſo alſo of *neglecting* the *Poor*; if it abhorrs *Idols*, which are a breach of the firſt Table, it abandons *Sacriledge*, which is a breach of *both* Tables.

6. It is troubled if it hath admitted any thing againſt the clear rule, be it never ſo little, be it but in a thought, *Deut.* 15. 9. Beware there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, *Iſa.* 35. 4. He is of a fearful heart, *Eccle.* 10. 20. *Curſe not* the *King*, *no* not in thy *thought*. They dare not let any *ſpot* of *guilt* cleave to them; Their converſation ſhews they do exerciſe themſelves to have always a conſcience void of offence towards God and towards Men, *Act.* 24. 16.

2 *Cor.* 8. 20. Avoiding this, that no man ſhould blame us, &c. *Duæ res ſunt conſcientia & fama. propter nos conſciantia noſtra nobis ſufficit: propter alios fama neceſſaria eſt: conſcientia tibi, fama; proximo.* Auguſt. Serm. priore de vita com. ſuorum clericorum.

7. Above all men to be void of offence towards the Magiſtrate. He is not apt by any intemperate ſpeeches, much leſs, otherwiſe to fly upon the Law or the Magiſtrate, yea though they ſhould require what he cannot do. His prayers are as many for him, his *good ſpeeches* as frequent of him, and his *fidelity* as great towards him, as if he had never received any difficult law from him. He tranſlates thoſe precepts out of *OEconomicks* into *Politicks*, which are given us *Eph.* 6. 3. *Col.* 3. 22. 1 *Pet.* 2. 18. He bears meekly the will and ſuffers meekly the anger of the Magiſtrate.

To what he may yield he is the forwarder if he cannot yield to every thing. He is first most tender of provoking *God*, and next of provoking *Gods Vicegerents*. It is the grief of his soul if he cannot come up to every thing the Magistrate expects of him.

8. He is willing to be *inform'd*, and to hear what may be said. As he is tender of doing any thing contrary to his judgment, so is he tender of judging contrary to the truth. He is not self-willed, but will hear what may be said against his way and his interest. *Eli* knew *Samuel* had a sharp message, yet says he, God do so to thee, and more also if thou hide, *&c.* 1 *Sam.* 3. 17.

9. He is *not apt* to be *censorious*, he considers that a *good man* may fall *by temptation*, and he rejoyces not at the fall of his brother, *Prov.* 24. 16. A just man falls seven times a day, *v.* 17. rejoyce not when thine enemy falls. He scoffs not at, nor triumphs over his enemy much less his neighbour and friend when he is down, but seeks his restoring, considering himself lest he also be tempted, *Gal.* 6. 1.

Gal. 2. 13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, in so much that *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation

10. *Conscientia tenera non est temeraria.* In doubtful cases it will seek and ask for information before it acts; though it is *not scrupulous*, it is *wary*, *considerate* and *watchful*; it takes counsel concerning the ways of God in Gods way, it goes to the Law and to the Testimony, *Isa.* 8. 20. and if it want understanding in that, is goes to the Interpreter, *Job* 33. 23. to the Priest, whose lips should preserve knowledge, at whose mouth they should seek the Law; if He cannot satisfie, it inquires what the Church in her Synods and Councils hath universally determin'd; not building its faith on the Church, which is built upon the faith it self, *Mat.* 16. but in doubtful cases, chusing publick interpretation before private, and acquiescing therein, though not as a ground of faith, yet as the safest and probable means of knowledge and instruction.

Seek ye out of the books of the Lord and read. *Isa.* 34. 16.

Mal. 2. 7.

See for this *Ecclesiast.* 6. 33. — 36. and ch. 8. 8, 9.

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These are the adjuncts and properties of a true tender conscience.

But all this while what shall we say to a doubting conscience? Rom. 4. 23. He that doubteth is damned or judged if he eat, because whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Question.

A dubious conscience is somewhat like a tender conscience, though not the same with it. Answ. 1.

It is observable, the things the Apostle speaks of, are matters of *religion* and not about civil matters. So that if a man should doubt in civil matters, this Text will give no sure footing for forbearance upon doubting; as if a man should doubt whether he might lawfully undertake the office of a *Constable* or *Headborough*, or whether he might *pledge* his friend when he *drinks* to him, or in a thousand instances more. Answ. 2.

The Apostle doth not instance in things clearly evil or good, but such as at that juncture of time, betwixt the setting of the Law and the dawning of the Gospel were dark and somewhat doubtful, as about the Jewish meats and festivals, yea, were in respect of express and clear good, not considerable; and therefore says, that the kingdome of God is not, *i. e.* doth not so much value eating or forbearing meats or drinks, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: the Apostle therefore making a clear distinction, betwixt things *uncertainly* good and things *absolutely* good; I say, those things that he hath put asunder let no man joyn together, as if they were the same matter of doubting. Answ. 3.

Therefore if any shall be so blind and bold as to say, let a thing be never so good that is required of me, if I be not perswaded it is good, I may not do it; or let it be never so evil, if I be perswaded I should do it, I must; they have no ground from the Apostles doctrine, who only speaks of doubting at meats Answ. 4.

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and days which he distinguishes from manifest good, *vers.* 17.

Thou hast despised my holy things, and hast profaned my Sabbaths, *Ezek.* 22. 8.

If therefore the thing be *clearly good*, as to receive the holy Supper, to joyn in publick prayer, to hear the holy Word read, interpreted and applyed, though the conscience should stick at these good things expressly commanded (which surely must need be some *strange fashion'd exotick* conscience) yet are we bound to perform the aforenamed duties, or any other of the like nature.

Answ. 5. In like manner we may say, if the thing be expressly evil, as to Worship an Image, to Forswear ones self, to Rob my Neighbour, to Lye with my Sister, to Kill my Brother, though conscience should urge me to any of these or the like, I may not do them.

Reas. 1. Because, else we set conscience above God, which is a breach both of the first and second Commandements 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. God is greater then our conscience. Conscience must not regulate the Word of God, but that must regulate the conscience.

Reas. 2. It is an undoubted rule, *Nulla est obligatio ad illicita.* Gods law obliges not to sin, therefore conscience which is to be ruled by that, must not. Errour is a sin, and how can it bind? And if we are bound to lay down error of judgement, then also errour of conscience, both being part of the old man to be put off *Eph.* 4. 22. as is observed both by *Amesius* and *Perkins.*

Reas. 3. If men should plead never so much satisfaction of conscience to do the forementioned evils, or forbear the good aforesaid, yet every man hath in him so much certainly of the law of nature, and every Christian probably so much of the knowledge of the Word, that they can neither do the evil or forbear the good without *reluctancy*, so that conscience in such cases if pleaded is but a fond and weak pretence.

Reas. 4. Grant but this allowable, what good may not be omitted? All the *ordinances* of God may lye *unfrequented*

quented and disused, neglected and affronted, Yea what mischiefs may not be acted upon pretext of conscience? One neighbour may plunder, pillage, yea, and murder another upon this pretext; Servants may make away their Masters goods & them too; Children may butcher their Parents, and which is more, Subjects their King; what (*a*) villanies and outrages were they that were not committed of later years upon pretence of conscience and reformation? and upon those tragical actings how well did the words of the Poet agree to us?

So it was here at home, of which times I might truly say as *Synes. hym.* 1. ὅ μοι ζωὰ -- δὲ φίλα διὰ γᾶν πατρίαν συφελιζομέναν,

But blessed be God, I may say what he adds, τὰν ἐξ ἀχέων ἔσασας.

(a) *Et quando uberior vitiorum copia?* Juvenal Satyr. 1.

—— *Quod mare* nam Anglicæ,
Non decoloravere cædes?
Quæ caret Ora cruore nostro?

Hor. lib. 2. od. 1.

If the thing be not forbidden by God, but lawful or not evil but indifferent, if the Magistrate command it to be done, though we know not the good or the end of the ordinance, the conscience is bound to yield to it; otherwise we take away from the Magistrate the power of making laws and ordinances, and give him only a power to confirm them that are made already in Scripture contrary to 1 *Pet.* 2. 13.

Answ. 6.

Res alioqui per se media mutant quodammodo naturam, quum aliquo legitimo mandato vel præcipiuntur, vel prohibentur--- Beza epist. 24. ad fratres peregrinarum ecclesiarum in Anglia.

If the Magistrate make a law about meats, which are in themselves and so acknowledged by him to be but indifferent, let it be out of civil ends for the good of the commonwealth, or out of religious ends, *viz.* charitably and christianly to comply with the ancient Churches of Christ, however a subject may plead matter of health or want, yet the plea of conscience in this case is unwarrantable and ridiculous.

Etsi conscientias proprii solus Deus ligat: tamen quatenus vel magistratus qui Dei minister est judicat interesse reipublicæ, ut quippiam alio qui pro se licitum non fiat: vel Ecclesia ordinis & decori adeoque ædificationis rationem habens, leges aliquas de rebus mediis rite condit, illæ leges à pijs omninò sunt observandæ. Beza ibid.

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Answ. 7. 1 Cor. 8. 8. If the thing be lawful in it self, and indifferent as meats are, and no obligation from the Governour lies upon me, I am then left to follow the light of mine own conscience, and to take care I do nothing against mine own perswasion, for of such things are the Apostles instances, and not of things commanded by God or man, or forbidden.

Leges Magistratus, etenus conscientias ligant ut nemo sciens & prudens rebellandi animo, possit absque peccato vel facere quæ ita prohibentur, vel omittere quæ sic præcipiuntur. Beza ibid.

Answ. 8. If the thing be lawful and indifferent, both in regard of Gods law, of mans law, and in the perswasion of mine own conscience, so that I think I may use it or not use it, do it or not do it, and have no tye any of those 3. ways, either from God, Man, or my Self, I must then look next to the Apostles rule concerning offences. 1. Not judge or despise him that is not just of my perswasion, *Rom.* 14. 3. 2. Not lay a stumbling block in our brothers way, *vers.* 13. Nor to give him occasion to think ill of me. 3. Not to grieve or afflict our brother with our liberty, *vers.* 25. 4. Not to occasion any brangling or disputing, but rather to forbear that, how lawful soever that may occasion it, *v.* 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edifie one another, *Gal.* 5. 13. For brethren ye have been called unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

1 Cor. 10. 29. *Nulla ratione committere debeo, nec occasionem dare ut alius erroneam & infirmam habens conscientiam, Indicet, i. e. damnet libertatem meam qua possum indifferenter quidvis edere* Estius in locum.

Domine Deus, da nobis celeriter audire, frequenter legere, diligenter attendere, recte intelligere, tuto agere, bene & inculpate vivere, per Jesum Christum Dominum & salvatorem nostrum. Amen.

FINIS.